

Virginia Slave Housing Project

Building Name: Huntley Brick Outbuilding (Kitchen-Quarter)

Evidence Type: Extant

Site ID: 029-0117

Historical Site Name: Huntley

City or Vicinity: Alexandria

County: Fairfax

State: Virginia

Investigator: Dennis J. Pogue

Institution: Virginia Slave Housing Project

Project Start: 4-29-21, 10-27-21

Project End: 8-2-22

Summary Description:

The Huntley outbuilding is a substantial, two-story, brick structure with a side-gable roof and center chimney, which measures roughly 32'4" by 26'4". The fenestration of the east-facing three-bay façade is generally regular, but the doorway is off-set in the far southwest corner of the wall and is covered by an open one-bay, shed-roofed porch. The openings appear to be in their original locations, although the windows and doors, along with their frames, have been replaced. The two first-floor windows in the rear and end walls are less regularly spaced and have been reworked or are later insertions. The long elevations are enhanced by a corbelled block cornice, surmounting the walls laid in 5 to 1 common bond. A one-bay, brick stair tower was added to the north wall in the 19th century, which allowed the two interior stairways to be shifted from the living spaces to the addition. The structure underwent extensive repairs beginning in 2016, when evidence for the earlier configuration was revealed.

The original plan on both floors likely consisted of a principal room running the length of the east half of the building, with two smaller, equal-sized rooms on the west. The center chimney served fireplaces in the three downstairs rooms and in two of the rooms above. The mass of the chimney base is substantial, measuring roughly 9' in the first-floor main room. At the time of the renovations, all of the fireplace openings were roughly 2'6", but the boxes clearly had been altered over time. The original width of the fireplace in the first-floor east room is unknown, therefore, but it may well have been larger, which would be expected if it served as a kitchen.

The large footprint of the main downstairs room (Room 1), with the fireplace centered on the interior wall, suggests that it served as a kitchen. The southern end of the room, away from the fireplace, acted as a circulation space. The main doorway is positioned in the far corner, along with a doorway in the opposite wall providing access to Room 2, and a stairway ran along the south wall leading to Room 4 above. If this section of the room was subdivided to serve as a lobby, no physical evidence was found to indicate a partition. A second exterior doorway had been located in the rear (west) wall providing

direct access to Room 3. The doorway was closed off at a later date, which may be when a doorway was inserted in the medial wall linking Rooms 2 and 3.

Physical evidence was found for the stairway in Room 1, as well as for a former opening for a stair in Room 3 that rose against the east wall to Room 6. The character of the masonry in the stair tower suggests that it was erected in the mid-late 19th century, when the steep interior stairs were presumably removed. These changes likely occurred after the Civil War, when the function of the building changed and the occupants of the building presumably shifted from the enslaved to free black or white workers.

Considering the sizes, locations, and connections between the various spaces provides the basis for interpreting their uses. The large footprint, prominent location running the length of the front side of the building, and likely oversized fireplace, suggest that Room 1 functioned as a cook room to support the main Huntley house. There was direct access from Room 1 to Room 2 on the first floor, and to Room 4 above. These heated spaces presumably served as living quarters for enslaved workers supporting the cooking, and other probable domestic functions. On the second floor, a doorway in Room 4 provided access to Room 5, which was unheated. Not all quartering spaces were heated, so this room could have been either used in a specialized storage or work function, and/or as a secondary living area.

Room 3 presumably served as quarters as well, with a separate entrance on the rear wall. The stairway in Room 3 provided access to Room 6 above, and thus the two rooms served as a combined quartering space. The separate entrance into Room 3, bypassing the likely cook room, conforms to a pattern that occurred over time of separating living areas from the kitchen function when possible, with only individuals directly involved with that domestic chore having regular access to the space. The accommodation of two heated rooms (3 and 6) also suggests that the occupants of that unit likely occupied a position of elevated status within the plantation community.

Little can be said about the treatment of the interiors of the rooms. Evidence was found during the renovations to indicate that the walls were at one time finished with whitewash. One of the standard upgrades made to buildings of this type was to install lathed and plastered walls and ceilings, and this was the case at Huntley. When that was accomplished is difficult to ascertain, however, and it may well have occurred after the building was adapted to the use of other occupants after the end of slavery.

The main house was erected in at least two stages, with initial construction of the two wings likely completed before 1825, based on the findings of dendrochronological analyses and other physical investigations. It is believed that the center section was added soon thereafter. Documents indicate that the family of Thomas F. Mason used Huntley as a kind of summer retreat during his ownership of the property. At some point this function appears to have changed to a more regular use, and several brick outbuildings were erected to support the change. These include a substantial icehouse, surmounted by a finished space interpreted as an office, and a combination smoke house and privy. These structures are positioned between the main house and the kitchen-

quarter, together forming the main elements of the service capacity to support the white household. Areas in the cellar of the house also were used as utilitarian spaces and include heated rooms that may have housed enslaved workers.

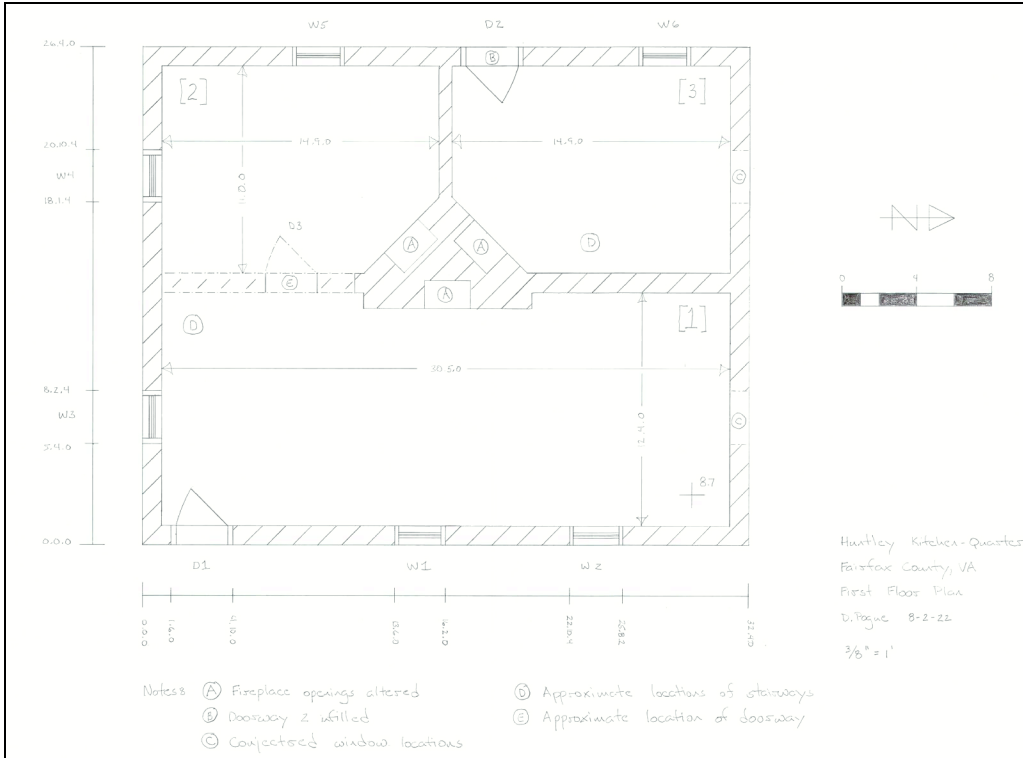
Structures that combined both quarters for the enslaved and work and storage spaces related to other domestic activities were one of the most common types of outbuildings found at plantations and farmsteads of prosperous owners before the Civil War. Based on the limited evidence currently available, the Huntley outbuilding likely performed that function. The structure has been interpreted as having served as housing for tenants and/or other free workers, black or white. This may well have been the case, as well-built structures that had been originally intended to serve as quarters were typically repurposed after slavery days. The changes commonly included reorganizing the living areas to suit the different needs of the new occupants, and adding the stair tower would fit that pattern.

Thomas F. Mason, who built the main house at Huntley in 1823-25, was a planter as well as a lawyer. Huntley was never his primary residence before his death in 1838. In the 1830 U.S. Census, Mason was listed as the enslaver of five people.

Other Documentation:

Huntley Historic Site, Historic Structure Report, SWSG, PC, Reston, Virginia (2002).

Principal Construction Type: Brick, Two-Story
Footprint:



Number of Rooms: 6

- Dimensions:**
- (1) 12'4" x 30'5" x 8'7"
 - (2) 11' x 14'9" x 8'7"
 - (3) NA but roughly equal to room 2
 - (4) 11'4³/₄" x 30'2¹/₂" x 7'3³/₄"
 - (5) 11'4 1/8" x 11'5 1/8" x 7'3³/₄"
 - (6) 11'5¹/₂" x 14'5³/₄" x 7'3³/₄"

Doors: 3

	Rm 1 (1)	Rm 2 (2)	Rm 5 (3)
Type:	Six-panel	Unknown	Unknown
Dimensions:	3'4" x 6'11"	NA	NA
Hardware:	Butt Hinges, 5 knuckle	NA	NA
Swing:	Inward	NA	NA
Replacement:	Yes	NA	NA

Windows: 13

	Rm 1, E (1)	Rm 1, E (2)	Rm. 1, S (3)
Type:	6/6 Sash	6/6 Sash	6/6 Sash
Dimensions:	2'8" x 5'8"	2'9" x 5'6"	2'9" x 5'0" (Shortened or raised 1'9")
Hardware:	NA	NA	NA
Replacement:	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Rm. 2, S (4)	Rm. 2, W (5)	Rm. 3, W (6)
Type:	6/6/ Sash	6/6 Sash	6/6/ Sash
Dimensions:	2'9" x 5'0" (shortened or raised 1'9")	2'9" x 5'0"	2'9" x 5'0"
Hardware:	NA	NA	NA
Replacement:	Yes	Yes	Yes

All seven second floor windows replaced: 6/6 sash, horizontal, roughly 2'3" x 2'11½" .

Likely 2-4 windows originally located in the north end wall.

EXTERIOR

Foundation: Continuous Masonry
Thickness: approx. 12"
Height: Full

Shed/Porch: Open, one-bay, shed roofed over east doorway (11'8" x 4'10"), not original

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable

Roof Covering: Metal

Roof Framing:

Exposed: No

Building Height: At SE corner

Ground to Bottom of Cornice: 16'7"

Ground to Top of Eave: 17'7"

Ground to Peak: 26'5³/₄"

Walls: Brick

Bond: 5 to 1 common

Mortar Type: NA

Repaired: Repointed; former doorways in west wall infilled

Finish: Painted

Chimney (1):

Material: Brick

Location: Center

Height: NA

INTERIOR

Wall: Brick

Wall Finish: Plaster board; previously whitewashed

Fireplaces: 5 (Rooms 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6) – all reworked or nonextant

Material: Brick

Stairs: 2 (Rooms 1 and 3) – nonextant

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor:

Floorboards Dimension: NA

Dating:

Dendrochronology Date: NA

Other Date: ca. 1820-1840

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Hewn headers, sash sawn joists

Nails: Machine-headed cut